

Illawarra District Rugby League Football Club Ltd
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ABN 90 002 762 610



30 March 2009

Gambling Inquiry Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission relating to your review of gambling in Australia. The Illawarra District Rugby League Football Club (Steelers Club) offers the services of poker machines, TAB & Keno to its patrons as a purpose of entertainment, with the revenue generated from these services allowing the club to continue its role in supporting National and Local sport as well as the wider community.

Key Facts

Steelers is a trading name adopted by the Illawarra District Rugby League Football Club Limited when the Club was formed to play rugby league in the major NSW competition in 1982. The Steelers played in that competition until 1998, before forming a joint-venture club in 1999 with the St George District Rugby League Football Club. The combined club, known as the St George Illawarra Dragons plays in the National Rugby League competition, with half of its home matches at WIN stadium in Wollongong and half at WIN Jubilee stadium in Kogarah. The St George Illawarra Dragons field teams in the NRL and Toyota Cup competitions, while the Steelers field Junior Representative teams in their own right in the S G Ball and Harold Matthews competitions.

The Steelers Licensed Club opened in 1990 primarily to generate revenue for the propagation and development of Rugby League in the Illawarra region. The football and licensed club operations are part of a single licensed rugby league football club structure under the one board of directors. The Steelers Board of nine directors is elected by members on a three year rotating basis, with three to be elected each year. This board sets policies to be carried out by Management and staff.

The Steelers Club has continued to grow and in December 2002 completed extensive renovations. With a current membership of more than 8000, it is firmly established as one of the leading Clubs in the Wollongong / Shoalhaven region.

The Steelers Club provides for its members and guests a range of services including:

Seasons Brasserie
Sports Lounge
Function Centre
Poker Machines
TAB
Keno
Live Entertainment
Automatic Teller Machine

Registered Offices:

St George Illawarra RLFC – Illawarra Office
Illawarra Division Rugby League Inc.
Illawarra Carlton League
Illawarra Toyota Junior Rugby League
Wollongong ahm Hawks



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Economic contribution

The Steelers Club currently employs 39 staff as well as a contract caterer who has 11 staff on its roster. The club engages numerous service providers for its operational requirements including permanent agreements with companies that supply:

- Beverage & catering products
- Security services
- Cleaning services
- Accounting & auditing services
- Poker machine services

The clubs automatic teller machine provides patrons with access to their daily banking needs in a safe environment, particularly outside normal business hours.

Poker Machine and gambling services accounted for 74.59% (\$4.7m) of the Steelers Club revenue during the last financial year. During the same period expenditure included:

- \$1.74m on salaries and wages
- \$530k on goods for sale
- \$150k on security services
- \$1.5m on other services

In addition we contributed \$1.25m in gaming tax payments

Social Contribution

Apart from our charter to promote Rugby League the Steelers Club continues to support a variety of sports in our region. The Club has supported, either directly or in kind, basketball, cricket, soccer, hockey, golf, touch football and rugby union teams as well as directly supporting individuals in their quest to go further in their chosen sports. We are also an annual supporter of both the Wollongong City and North Wollongong Surf Life Saving Clubs.

Additionally we support the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Mater Dei, the St Vincent De Paul Society, the Para Meadows foundation and the Men of League. With the assistance of other local clubs we also fund a local gambling counseling service through Reverend Chester Carter of the Shire Counseling & Medical centre.

In the last financial year, the club provided \$171,000 in contributions and support.

In the Wollongong community the club and its directors are active participants in key decisions for the region. Representatives of the board sit on numerous charitable and fund raising committees, and are heavily involved at the junior level of the sport of rugby league. The club's management is part of the local CDSE committee and Liquor accords and is working closely with local council on improving community sustainability. Our club's joint venture partnership with the St George Illawarra Dragons provides the community with increased tourism, revenue and employment, assisting many businesses in this region.

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On a wider scale representatives of our board represent the local region on many Boards. Chairman Peter Newell is the President of Clubs Australia, Chairman of ClubsNSW and a director of the NSW Institute of Sport. Director Bob Millward is a director of the National Rugby League, Australian Rugby League and NSW Rugby League and director Shane McKellar is Chairman of the Greater Southern Rugby League committee.

Responsible Gambling commitment

The Steelers Club is committed to the responsible provision of gambling products in a safe environment. As well as subscribing to the Club Safe program we also fund a local gambling counseling service through Reverend Chester Carter of the Shire Counseling & Medical centre and provide support through Mission Australia.

Any impact on our ability to provide gambling services would negate our ability to provide such contributions to the economy and our community as outlined above and it would impact our own viability.

I again thank you for the opportunity to contribute and look forward to the outcome of your review.

Regards

Scott Miles
General Manager

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